



Tennessee Department of Tourist Development

Tourism E-news



The stage is set for you!



E-News V04.9/10

Special 2004 Governor's Conference Issue

Tennessee Tourism Industry Growth Trends Continue

Tennessee continued steady economic growth in 2003 for travel related spending, travel related employment and the number of visitors, announced the state's Department of Tourist Development on Sept. 15 during the Governor's Conference on Tourism.

In 2003, direct domestic and international travel spending reached more than \$10.8 billion, a 2.3 percent increase from 2002. The state also saw a one percent increase in 2002 in spending, despite a 2.4 percent downturn nationwide. In addition, the payroll generated by direct travel spending grew 2.3 percent to \$4.7 billion in 2003, while the number of travel-related employment hit 177,100, up from 175,800 in 2002.

The number of Tennessee visitors rose to 42.8 million in 2003 from 42 million in 2002.

Tourist Development Commissioner Susan Whitaker announced the growth trends during her state of the industry speech at The Peabody Hotel before more than 300 tourism industry professionals from around the state. The statistics are part of a new report commissioned by the state from the Travel Industry Association of America.



▲ Governor Phil Bredesen and Commissioner Susan Whitaker visit with Al Green, Memphis pastor and gospel music legend, at the September Governor's Conference on Tourism.

"These results continue to demonstrate the commitment and hard work of every person in Tennessee's tourism industry," Whitaker said. "Despite the national trends since September 11, 2001, our state has continued to show growth all across our state. As I travel the state, I hear stories of hard work and innovative strategies to grow our industry, and we are proud to be called a partner in these efforts."

The comprehensive study, commissioned by the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development each year, measures many of the state's labor and revenue figures in determining statistics and trends related to the Tennessee travel industry. A copy of the report is available on the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development Web site (<http://www.state.tn.us/tourdev/>). ■

Tennessee Tourism Rocks Memphis for 2004 Governor's Conference

Downtown Memphis set the stage for more than 300 tourism industry professionals attending the 2004 Governor's Conference on Tourism Sept. 14-16 at The Peabody Hotel.

The annual conference, cosponsored by the Tennessee the Tennessee Tourism Roundtable (TTR) and the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development (TDTD), featured dynamic speakers, workshops, participation from a wide array of people in the industry, and the famous Memphis hospitality, said Cindy Bruce, TTR executive director.

The three-day event kicked-off on Tuesday with a golf tournament and an evening opening reception at the Memphis Zoo, hosted by the Memphis Convention and Visitors Bureau.

In front of hundreds of tourists and conference attendees Tuesday afternoon, TDTD Commissioner Susan Whitaker was honored by The Peabody Hotel as Honorary Duck Master, as she led the ducks on their famous daily walk down the red carpet from the fountain in the lobby to the elevator and up to their home on the hotel's roof.

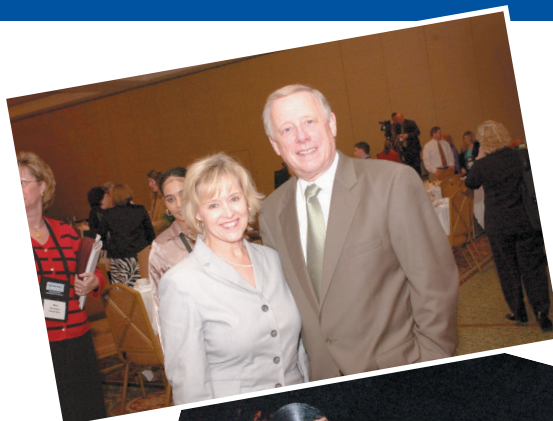
During Wednesday's opening session Commissioner Whitaker gave a "state of the industry" overview, reviewing Tennessee's growth trends in 2003 and the departments strategic initiatives.

Futurist Ed Barlow also spoke to the conference attendees on trends in the marketplace and stressed the importance of the partnership of economic development and tourism.

Governor Phil Bredesen delivered the luncheon keynote address on Wednesday during the TTR's annual awards luncheon. Arthur Keith, general manager of the Gaylord Opryland Hotel in Nashville, provided the closing address on Thursday.

"This was an exciting conference that provided our industry a number of platforms to exchange ideas, share resources and plan for future growth in the industry," Commissioner Whitaker said. "I want to thank the TTR for their leadership in making this a great event and our host city, Memphis, for their incredible hospitality. We're now hard at work planning next year's conference to make it even better and more educational for our industry partners."

The 2005 Governor's Conference will be held September 21-23 in Franklin. ■



▲ TTR Chairman Claudia Moody and Governor Phil Bredesen; Calvin Taylor and Lisa Catron of the Memphis Convention and Visitors Bureau talk with Kevin Brewer, vice president of sales for the Memphis CVB, during the Peabody Rooftop Party; Commissioner Whitaker, Peabody Hotel honorary duck master, walks the famous ducks across the hotels roof; More than 300 industry professionals attended seminars throughout the conference; Futurist Ed Barlow delivers the conferences opening keynote address

Tennessee Welcome Centers and Hotel & Lodging Industry Assist Refugee Travelers from Hurricanes

Tennessee Welcome Centers add staff to accommodate travelers.

When back-to-back hurricanes slammed Florida, Tennessee's Welcome Center managers and hostesses found their parking lots and lobbies overflowing with Floridians traveling north to escape the fury of the storms.

"Many of our visitors came with little advanced planning, and others were determined to make the best of a bad situation by doing some Tennessee sightseeing," said Welcome Center director Ray Page. "Our employees were able to help travelers find free shelter services, hotel lodging and open campgrounds, and assisted them with problems that included finding lodging for pets and livestock. It was round-the-clock work for several days, and our employees rose to the occasion without complaint. I'm very proud of them."

The department responded quickly to the national weather alert for overland evacuation procedures. Tami Giles, the department's safety director and welcome center

assistant, was the TEMA contact and, along with Dianne Murray, the department's TEMA backup, marshaled industry and employee forces to be ready at the state's major interstate gateways over the weekend of the storm. She also contacted the Tennessee Hotel and Lodging Association for assistance, which responded by giving welcome centers updates on available lodging and offering discounted room rates.



▲ Cars are bumper to bumper as residents leave New Orleans heading north after hurricanes threaten gulf coast cities.

"TH&LA launched the 'Together We Prepare Program' and requested assistance from members and nonmember properties in Tennessee. We specifically asked that they forecast room vacancies and make these rooms available at discounted rates for victims of the hurricane," said Tom Negri, President of the TH&LA. "All 14 TH&LA chapters within the state signed up and agreed to participate. Ronda Combs worked with Tami Giles to coordinate communications between these properties and the welcome centers. We were pleased to help our visitors during a time of trouble, particularly those along the I-75 corridor."

According to TEMA, some 30,000 travelers from Florida and several southern states sought refuge in Tennessee during the storms. ■

Tennessee Vacation Guide Website Wins Marketing Award

The Web Marketing Association awarded TNvacation.com, an "Outstanding Web Site" award during their 2004 WebAward Competition. The award recognized TNvacation.com as a destination travel Web site maintained above and beyond the standard of excellence found in the industry. Miles Media Group created and administers the Web site for the department and submitted it for competition.

The WebAward Competition is a premier annual event judging Web site development against an ever-increasing Internet standard and against peer sites in each industry.

TNvacation.com joins more than 1,000 site winners, including Ohio's Division of Tourism, the Portland Oregon Visitors Association, Rail Europe and the National Palace Museum of Taipei. In addition, USDM.net won a "Standard of Excellence" for the Pigeon Forge Department of Tourism site at www.mypigeonforge.com.

A complete list of winners can be viewed at www.webaward.org. A number of Tennessee businesses and institutions won awards, including St. Jude's Children's Hospital in Memphis and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Tennessee in Chattanooga. ■

More Tennessee Award Winners



▲ Regena Bearden accepts the ESTO "Destiny Award" for the Memphis CVB's Marketing Programs – Full Campaign. Also pictured: Paul Sacco and Larry Meehan of ESTO.

Memphis Is In the ESTO Spotlight!

Congratulations to the Memphis CVB for landing a "Destiny Award for Marketing Programs – Full Campaign" at the 21st Annual Educational Seminar for Tourism Organizations (ESTO) in Boston.

ESTO had the second highest attendance in the event's history and a record 46 state tourism directors. ESTO is produced by TIA's National Councils Department on behalf of its National Council of State Tourism Directors (NCSTD) and the National Council of Destination Organizations (NCDO). Conference sessions reflected the most current topics, trends and challenges facing the national tourism markets. The conference seeks to network national and state leaders and to offer inspiring new ways of thinking for tourism professionals.

Award-Winning Article Promotes Stax Museum



◀ Interactive touch-screen exhibits bring back the sights and sounds of Soul.

Memphis' *Commercial Appeal* newspaper reporters Bill Ellis and Pamela Perkins won first place in the Missouri Lifestyle Journalism Awards

for a series of stories in 2003 on the Stax Museum of American Soul Music. The award, given by the University of Missouri School of Journalism, is the oldest and most widely known feature writing and editing accolade for American newspapers.

▶ Isaac Hayes' 1972 gold-trimmed "Superfly" Cadillac is just one of many items on exhibit.



According to the award judges, "The writers capture the musicians, the racially turbulent times they worked and how the industry evolved. The work is done with savvy and respect, humor and insight."

NAIA Pow Wow Named One of North America's Top 16

▶ A dancer honors native traditions and showcases his skills by creating authentic Plains Indian regalia for competition.



Native Peoples magazine released a list of "North America's Top 16 Pow Wows" in their August issue and the Native American Indian Association's annual October Pow Wow in Tennessee was one of the winners. The NAIA "Intertribal Pow Wow and Fall Festival" is held this year at the Four Corners Marina/Park Recreation Area on Oct. 15 – 17. This is the 23rd year of celebration, and organizers are expecting 15,000 people. The *Native Peoples* award speaks eloquently of the hard work and magnificent hospitality the Nashville Pow Wow offers to all people interested in preserving and enjoying the culture of North America's Native Americans. ■

Keith Britt Named Director of Communications

Keith Britt has joined the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development as director of communications.



Keith Britt

Britt recently served as a senior account manager at Ackermann PR in Knoxville and as a principal with WKB Public Relations. Britt brings 15 years of public relations and marketing experience to the department. He also served as a group director for Dye Van Mol & Lawrence and vice president of The Buntin Group, both of Nashville, as well as chief operating officer of Thompson & Baker in Memphis. Britt specializes in consumer product public relations, strategic planning, crisis communication and issues management.

During his career, Britt has created public relations campaigns for a wide array of clients including the Jack Daniel's family of brands, Tehama (Clint Eastwood's line of golf apparel), J.C. Bradford & Co., UC Lending, Kraft Food Ingredients, Thomas & Betts, High Five Entertainment, and television programs and series on TNN, Discovery, PBS, Oxygen and CMT.

Britt's issues management work includes coordinating political campaigns and initiatives in Missouri, Tennessee, Mississippi, Arkansas, and Florida. In 2002, he was communications director and strategist for U.S. Senator Bob Graham's (D-Fla.) state constitutional amendment initiative, Education Excellence for Florida (EEF), which restructured the management system of the state's 11 public universities.

Britt has won praise for his public relations campaigns, including four Pollie Awards from the American Association of Political Consultants. ■

Field Reports

From West Tennessee

Memphis was the location for the international broadcast of the travel radio program, "Ramblin' with Ramsey" on Sunday, October 3. Host Ramsey Pollard, Jr.'s program airs on the Cable Radio Network on the Internet as well as the Talk One Radio Network, which has 120 AM radio stations in 31 states. The three hour program featured a wide-array of information on Tennessee's attractions and events. Commissioner Whitaker and Assistant Commissioner Phyllis Qualls-Brooks were interviewed for the program.

From Middle Tennessee

"Home for the Holidays" in Giles County has been honored as one of Southeast Tourism Society's (STS) Top Twenty Events.

Derrick Smith, regional marketing and public relations manager, traveled to Decatur, Ala., for the Natchez Trace Compact Meeting and Rural Tourism Conference, where Tennessee continues to be regarded as the leader in rural development. While in Alabama, Smith met with media representatives from Birmingham to promote travel destinations and festivals.

In early October, Smith along with communications director Keith Britt, held a "media relations workshop" at the Nashville Superspeedway in Wilson County. Additional workshops will be held in each region during the year. The industry attendees for the Middle Tennessee workshop were:

Attendee	Organization Represented
Wendy Bryant	Rutherford Co.
Ricky Rodriguez	Wilson County CVB
Amy McBroom	Upper Cumberland Tourism Assn.
Beth A. Smith	Cookeville-Putnam County C of C, CVB
George & Charlien McGlothlin	Historic Falcon Manor, McMinnville
Deborah Warnick	Historic Leipers Fork
Sheree Taylor	South Central Tennessee Tourism Assoc.
Simonne McElhiney	The Hermitage: Home of President Andrew Jackson
Greer Bromel	Middle Tennessee Tourism Council
Brenda Pierce	Middle Tenn. Visitors Bureau
Margie Thessin	Carnton Plantation, Franklin

From East Tennessee



◀ Townsend's Fall Heritage Festival was one of the highlights of the Smokies Media Tour. Live music and mountain food and crafts were part of the attraction.

▶ Tim Cable, anchor/feature reporter for WJHL-TV, Johnson City; Herb Handy, executive vice president of tourism for the Smoky Mountains CVB; and Joe Tennis, feature reporter for the Bristol Herald Courier give Nicky Reynolds a helping hand while fly fishing for mountain trout.



Nicky Reynolds, regional marketing and public relations manager, attended the Smokies Media Tour in Townsend and other parts of Blount County, September 22-24. With 34 counties to cover, it's been an effort to see all there is to see in East Tennessee, and the Smokies Media Tour provided Reynolds with ample opportunity to see the "Peaceful Side of the Smokies." In addition to visiting downtown Maryville, taking a hayride through Cades Cove, and checking out some of the area's great attractions and shops, Reynolds learned how to fly fish and play a Psaltery.

The following week, Reynolds helped coordinate the "Taste of Tennessee" AAA Familiarization Tour. The tour began in Nashville, and Reynolds caught up with the group of 27 AAA Auto Club counselors in Chattanooga and stayed with them through their tour of Sevierville. The department offers a special thanks to Bennjin Lao in Nashville, Shelda Rees and Jennifer Littlejohn in Chattanooga, and Scott King in Sevierville for putting the tour together.

Reynolds also visited several farms on a September Southeast Tennessee Tourism Association (SETTA) Agri-tourism Tour. One of the region's agri-tourism success stories is the Johnson Family Farm, saved by three sisters who opened the property to the public by creating a corn maze, dairy tours and a family-style restaurant, The Cookie Jar. The farm is located on Kelly Cross Road in Dunlap (www.johnsonfamilyfarm.com).



▶ Savannah Lockhart poses on a tractor in the middle of a petting zoo on her family's farm, one of agri-tourism's success stories in East Tennessee.

Sales Report

Travel South Showcase Update

Marketing and promotion of the 22nd annual **Travel South Showcase February 12 - 16, 2005 in Memphis** continues. This year's theme is, "Many Places To Go, One Place to Begin" and sets the stage for an exciting and enhanced marketplace. New features of the 2005 showcase include:

- Themed Itineraries
- Trends and Education
- Connections Café
- Easy Online Registration

Registrations have been mailed for Travel South Showcase '05 and registration is available online at www.travelsouthusa.com. More than 6,000 travel buyers, suppliers and travel service providers have been invited to participate at this popular marketplace in Memphis. This is a great opportunity for Tennessee, and we need your help to make this a success. Please, volunteer today! Watch for monthly updates on Showcase progress in future issues of E-news. For more information, contact Lee Curtis, director of sales, at 615-741-9045 or email her at lee.curtis@state.tn.us.

From our **International tourism offices**, Rachel Kisber Obermeier reports US Airways is interested in cosponsoring a travel agent breakfast featuring golf packages and Tennessee destinations because several tour operators are interested in promoting golfing in the South. This would be new to our

German market, and Obermeier is working with Tennessee State Parks as well as our department to provide golfing venues.

David Nicholson and Wolfgang Streithorger were in Memphis for the **2004 Governor's Conference on Tourism** to conduct an educational session on "Tennessee and the European Market: the Who, What, When, Where and Why." If you were unable to attend the conference, contact Curtis for an overview of their remarks. Also, check out the Tennessee promotional photo web site at www.tennessee-photo.net created by Lofthouse for overseas travel writers and tour operators.



Plans for the department's **NTA Industry/Delegate Tennessee Dinner** on Monday, November 15 in Toronto, Ontario are under way. This has proven to be a very successful event for one-on-one time with both new and existing tour operators interested in Tennessee. We will again have the DMO workstation and state caucus at NTA. If you have any suggestions or questions, please contact Curtis. ■

Latest TIA Reports Online

The TIA *TravelScope 2003 Travel Barometer Report* and the *2003 Economic Impact of Travel on Tennessee Counties* are available online at the department's Web site - www.state.tn.us/tourdev/reports. The travel barometer indicates the current and future trends and demographics of travelers in Tennessee.

Hard copies of both reports are also available. Please call Patricia Gray at (615) 741-9004 for a copy or for more information about the executive summaries of these reports.

Grant Opportunities Now Online

A number of state and federal grant site links are now provided online through the department's Web site, www.state.tn.us/tourdev/reports. From the arts to agriculture and conservation to history, opportunities exist to help fund tourism related projects. The grant opportunities report also offers links to developing and writing successful grant proposals and land & water conservation fund resources. ■

Fall Color Spotters Needed

In the last issue of the department's E-news, we asked for Fall Color Spotters from the industry and friends of tourism. If you, or someone you know, would like to participate, please email Lorene.Lambert@state.tn.us. Your message by Wednesday of every week from now through November helps the Communications Division forecast color peaks and driving routes across the state. This is an excellent opportunity for you to showcase your county or region.

In addition to the 800-697-4200 weekly messages, Lambert also uses spotter information for media inquiries and for tourists who request additional information on color peaks and driving routes.

Thanks to the following color spotters who signed on early and agreed to send in reports:

Janice Neal	Byrdstown Pickett County Chamber of Commerce	www.dalehollow.com
Tanya Irwin	Team Hardin County	www.tourhardincounty.org
Mike Williams	Tennessee Forestry Division	mike.d.williams@state.tn.us
Marty Silver	Warriors Path State Park	marty.silver@state.tn.us

Agri-Tourism Gets Major Boost With Second \$100K USDA Grant

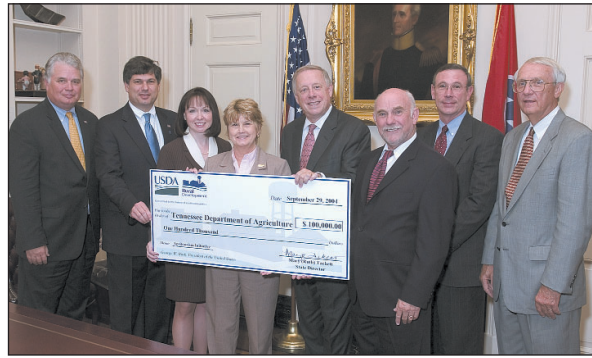
Tennessee has been awarded a \$100,000 grant from USDA Rural Development to help increase tourism dollars in the state's rural communities and to build farm income through the state's agri-tourism initiative.

In a State Capitol ceremony, USDA Rural Development state director Ruth Tackett presented Governor Phil Bredesen with a \$100,000 check to kickoff the second phase of the agri-tourism initiative started by the state last year.

"There are many enterprising farm families and communities that have taken advantage of opportunities in agri-tourism. We want to make this grant work to help these and other potential entrepreneurs build farm income and increase tourism in our rural communities," said Governor Phil Bredesen. "I want to thank USDA Rural Development for their financial support. This grant will help ensure the continued success of the program."

Bredesen was joined by Agriculture Commissioner Ken Givens, Tourist Development Commissioner Susan Whitaker, Economic and Community Development Commissioner Matt Kisber and UT Center for Profitable Agriculture director Dan Wheeler.

"Rural Development understands that tourism plays a significant role in the economic growth in rural communities,"



▲ Governor Phil Bredesen accepts a \$100,000 check from USDA Rural Development director Ruth Tackett (center) to help promote agri-tourism in Tennessee. Joining Bredesen and Tackett are (L to R) ECD assistant commissioner Joe Barker, ECD commissioner Matt Kisber, Tourist Development commissioner Susan Whitaker, Agriculture commissioner Ken Givens, Agriculture assistant commissioner Joe Gaines and UT Center for Profitable Agriculture director Dan Wheeler. This is the second \$100K grant from Rural Development to help fund the second phase of the states initiative to build farm income and tourism in Tennessee's rural communities.

said Tackett. "We are excited to continue our partnership with the Tennessee Department of Agriculture and support the state's agri-tourism initiative."

Agri-tourism refers to farm-related activities, products and services that are meant to attract visitors such as pick-your-own farms, corn mazes, farm tours, gift shops and wineries that use Tennessee grown products.

"Agri-tourism is continuing to grow in Tennessee and becoming more and more popular with not only tourists but also

our fellow Tennesseans. This second grant will help foster the continued growth for events and attractions in this segment of our tourism industry," said Commissioner Whitaker.

The aim of the state's initiative is to work with farmers, local chambers of commerce, visitor bureaus and others to build farm income through agri-tourism, expanding tourist income in rural communities and establishing a sustainable, long-term program. The initiative is a cooperative effort among the departments of Agriculture, Tourist Development and Economic and Community Development, and the University of Tennessee Center for Profitable Agriculture.

This is the second \$100,000 USDA Rural Development grant for the project. The first grant helped fund an inventory of more than 225 agri-tourism venues statewide.

The second grant will help expand these services in addition to funding a training and operations manual for entrepreneurs and a statewide conference planned for Nashville in 2005.

Agri-tourism has a significant impact on Tennessee's economy. Agri-tourism operators hosted about 3.5 million visitors in 2002. ■

"What's New in Tennessee for 2005" Deadline is November 1 Send industry submissions to Lorene.Lambert@state.tn.us

Tourism E-news

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Send your comments and suggestions to the editor, Lorene Lambert, at (615) 741-9025 or Lorene.Lambert@state.tn.us. We welcome your input as we work together to put the spotlight on Tennessee!

